



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 28 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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January 15, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
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From: Geneva Berger, Chair 
Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

RE: Importance of Mental Health Services for Children

The recent tragedy at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut saddens all of us. Throughout the news coverage information came out about other mass shootings. One of the shocking pieces of information that emerged is that since 1996 there have been 56 shooting incidents in schools throughout the United States considered "mass murders." In 43 of the 56 incidents the shooters were under the age of 25. The median age was 17 and the youngest shooter was six years old.¹ These figures were only school related "mass murders" and do not include the movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, or mall shootings where the shooters were in the same age group.

As President Obama, Los Angeles County, and the nation search for ways to prevent these tragedies in the future and protect our children, the Commission for Children and Families urges the Board of Supervisors to continue to recognize the importance of prevention and early intervention programs for children and youth. We especially believe that more mental health services need to be developed and readily available to address the needs of troubled transition age youth. We know that mental health issues begin very early in life; therefore, we need a system that focuses on prevention and early intervention for children and that provides a continuum of care throughout life.

c: Chief Executive Officer
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¹ Infoplease.com: Time Line of Worldwide School Shootings [Internet]. Available from:
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0777958.html#ixzz2Glo2Rrhe>